**VSS Pre-Conference Session: Best Practices for Online Teaching**

1. **Introduction of Topic “Big Picture:” Welcome & Goals – Pre-Conference “Chair/Organizer” (40 minutes)**
   1. Kristin Kipp
   2. Includes course walkthrough highlighting key features
   3. Includes interview with student via Skype re: What makes a good online course and a good online teacher?
2. **Topic Experts for Panel 1: Connecting and Creating Community with Students in the Online Environment (50 minutes total)**
   1. **Presentations:** Presenters should plan to speak for about 10 minutes and provide a brief overview of their teaching situation as well as an introduction to some of their best practices in creating community in the online environment.
      1. Presenter 1 (10 minutes): Tara Park, Pennsylvania Virtual
      2. Presenter 2 (10 minutes): Andrew Vandenheuvel, NOTY finalist
      3. Presenter 3 (10 minutes): Jonny O’Lonergan, Academy 20
   2. **Questions and Answers** with whole group (20 minutes): Please prepare for the questions below. We will also take questions from the audience.
      1. If you were talking to a brand new online teacher, what would be the very first “go-to” strategy that you would suggest for creating community in an online classroom?
      2. What are some of the benefits and pitfalls of using social networking sites and/or texting to create community among students?
      3. What are some examples of group interaction (projects, discussion boards, etc.) within an online classroom and how do you make those interactions productive?
      4. How do you make sure that you truly know your students?
      5. What do you do when a student disappears from your online classroom? How do you help them re-engage?

**BREAK #1 - Networking (10 minutes)**

1. **Topic Experts for Panel 2: Working with At-Risk Students in the Online Environment (50 minutes total)**
   1. **Presentations:** Presenters should plan to speak for about 10 minutes and provide a brief overview of their teaching situation as well as an introduction to some of their best practices in working with at-risk students in the online environment.
      1. Presenter 1 (10 minutes): Emily Parrish, NOTY finalist
      2. Presenter 2 (10 minutes): Tom Landon, NOTY finalist
      3. Presenter 3 (10 minutes): Rick Tanski, Academy 20
   2. **Questions and Answers** with whole group (20 minutes): Please prepare for the questions below. We will also take questions from the audience.
      1. At-risk students have often “checked out” of the school process. What do you do to help them re-engage with academics?
      2. Online learning is often considered a viable alternative for at-risk students to prevent dropout. What impact has that reputation had on online learning? How will it impact the future of the field?
      3. In your experience, what structures have been most successful for working with at-risk students? This could be course structures (student choice, self-paced, etc.) or support structures (counselors, advisors, etc.) within your school.

**BREAK #2 - Networking (10 minutes)**

1. **Roundtable Breakouts (40 minutes)**
   1. **Facilitators:** Please prepare approximately 10 discussion questions and/or ideas for your table. You’ll be in charge of facilitating a discussion on your assigned topic for the 40 minute session. Participants will probably have a lot of questions too and we should allow flexibility for that.

* Topics and Facilitators (# of tables and topics to be adjusted based on attendance):
  + Differentiation: Tara Park, Pennsylvania Virtual
  + Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: Tom Landon, NOTY finalist
  + Motivating Students: Andrew Vandenheuvel, NOTY finalist
  + Assessment and Providing Feedback: Michael Arsenault, Academy 20
  + Facilitating Discussion Boards: Facilitator Needed
  + Using Synchronous Tools : Facilitator Needed
  + Strategies for Hybrid & Blended Learning: Emily Parrish, NOTY finalist
  + Time Management: Kristin Kipp
* One facilitator per table with key questions to start conversation

1. **Summary: Key Areas to Consider (30 minutes)**

* Share out “take away ideas” from table groups
* Recommendations and resources
* Conclusion & Wrap-Up